

INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION CABLE

DATE 26 MAY 1971
IN 342541
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COUNTRY LAOS

DOI 1967 A 17 APRIL 1971

SUBJECT REPORTS OF TWO AMERICAN MALE AND ONE AMERICAN
FEMALE HELD PRISONER BY THE PL/NVA NEAR SAM
NEUA IN APRIL 1971 AND IN THE LAO NGAM AREA
IN 1967-68

ACQ

SOURCE

SUMMARY. ON 17 APRIL 1971 AND CIRCA 1967-1968 A GROUP
OF TWO AMERICAN MALES AND ONE AMERICAN FEMALE WERE OBSERVED
IN CAPTIVITY UNDER THE CONTROL OF PATHET LAO AND NORTH VIET-
NAMESE GUARDS. THE 1971 SIGHTING TOOK PLACE IN BAN TONG,
A VILLAGE NEAR SAM NEUA IN HOUA PHAN PROVINCE. THE EARLIER
SIGHTING OCCURRED IN A VILLAGE NEAR LAO NGAM JUST NORTH OF
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FINEMENT ARE PROVIDED. END OF SUMMARY.

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(classification) (dissem controls)

1. SOURCE OF

2. AS OF 17 APRIL 1971 TWO AMERICAN MALE, ONE AMERICAN FEMALE AND TWO HAI PRISONERS WERE HELD AT BAN TONG /VH 279613/ 25 KILOMETERS /KMS/ NORTHEAST OF SAM NEUA /VH 0057/ IN HOUA PHAN PROVINCE. [REDACTED] COMMENT. THE NAME OF THE TOWN AS RELATED BY THE GUERRILLA [REDACTED] MEMBER SOUNDED LIKE QUOTE BATONG UNQUOTE. WHEN SHOWN A 1:50:000 SCALE MAP OF THE AREA EAST OF SAM NEUA THE GUERRILLA CONCLUDED THAT THE TOWN WAS BAN TONG. [REDACTED] DID NOT SAY BATONG NEUA. A BAN TONG NEUA IS TWO KMS SOUTHWEST OF BAN TONG AT VH 268597. / [REDACTED] AND 15 NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY /NVA/ TROOPS WENT TO BAN NAKAY NEUA /VH 197573/ FOR THE CELEBRATION OF BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY ON 15-16 APRIL, AND WENT TO BAN TONG AFTERWARD TO VIEW THE PRISONERS. ON 17 APRIL

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(classification)

(dissem. controls)

THE PRISONERS WERE SITTING IN THE VILLAGE AREA OF BAN TONG AND A NUMBER OF PEOPLE FROM THE AREA HAD COME TO LOOK AT THEM.

3. [REDACTED] ORDER OF BATTLE /OB/ HOLDINGS CANNOT CONFIRM A PRISON AT BAN TONG. HOWEVER, A POLITICAL PRISON WAS REPORTED THERE IN MID-DECEMBER 1968. CURRENT OB HOLDINGS CONFIRM PRISONS IN THE BAN NAKAY NEUA AREA AND IN THE HANG LONG /VH 1362/ ARDA, 10 KMS NORTHEAST OF SAM NEUA. THERE IS NO RECENT PHOTOGRAPHIC COVERAGE OF THE BAN TONG AREA.

4. NONE OF THE PRISONERS APPEARED TO BE OF VERY LARGE STATURE. THEIR CLOTHES WERE OLD AND WORN. ONE OF THE AMERICAN MEN HAD LONG WHITE HAIR PUSHED STRAIGHT BACK OVER HIS HEAD AND PAST HIS EARS. THE AMERICAN WOMAN WAS YOUNG. HER HAIR WAS COVERED BY A CLOTH WRAPPED AROUND IT LIKE A TURBAN.

5. [REDACTED] COMMENT. ACCORDING TO A FORMER PL TRUCK DRIVER WHO RALLIED IN AUGUST 1969, IN EARLY FEBRUARY 1965 TWO AMERICAN JET AIRCRAFT WERE SHOT DOWN WHILE HE WAS IN BAN NAKAY NEUA. ONE PILOT PARACHUTED SAFELY AND WAS CAPTURED BY PL FORCES. A PILOT AND FEMALE PASSENGER PARACHUTED

(classification)

(dissem controls)

FROM THE OTHER AIRCRAFT AND LANDED NEAR BAN BAK /VH 1857/, ONE KM WEST OF NAKAY NEUA. THE WOMAN BROKE A LEG ON LANDING AND THE PILOT SUSTAINED MULTIPLE INJURIES. THE TRUCK DRIVER SAID THE WOMAN WAS A BLOND, BUT COULD NOT PROVIDE ANY DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE OTHER AMERICANS. ALL THREE AMERICANS WERE KEPT IN A CAVE FOR ONE DAY AND WERE THEN TAKEN TO HANOI.

6. TEN NVA TROOPS GUARDED THE PRISONERS. THE GUARDS TOOK THE PRISONERS OUT OF BAN TONG TO WORK DURING THE DAY-TIME AND BROUGHT THEM BACK AT NIGHT.

7. [REDACTED] COMMENT. THE GUERRILLAS OBTAINED NO OTHER DETAILS COVERING THE ABOVE PRISON OR PRISONERS. [REDACTED] SAID HE DID NOT KNOW OF ANY OTHER PRISONS WHERE FOREIGNERS WERE INCARCERATED IN THE SAM NEUA OR NAKAY NEUA AREAS.

8. SOURCE [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(classification)

(dissem controls)

[REDACTED]

HAS A POOR MEMORY, IS DULL-WILLED AND HAS POOR JUDGEMENT CONCERNING DISTANCE, HEIGHT, WEIGHT AND AGE.

9. IN CIRCA 1967-1968 VILLAGERS IN BAN NA SIAT /UNLOCATED/ IN THE LAO NGAM /XC 2509/ AREA OF SARAVANE PROVINCE TOLD [REDACTED] WHO WAS VISITING THE VILLAGE, THAT A COMBINED NVA/PL PLATOON HAD THREE AMERICAN PRISONERS OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE. [REDACTED] COMMENT. [REDACTED] WAS NOT SURE OF THE LOCATION OF THE VILLAGE, BUT BELIEVED IT WAS IN THE XC 3406 AREA, NINE KMS SOUTHEAST OF LAO NGAM. A BAN NA SIAT DOES NOT APPEAR ON LOCAL MAPS OF THE AREA, BUT A LOCALLY PUBLISHED GAZETTEER DOES IDENTIFY A BAN NASIAT AS LOCATED AT XC 0424, 26 KMS NORTHWEST OF LAO NGAM AND 16 KMS EAST OF KHONG SEDONE /WC 8734/. IT IS NOT CONSIDERED LIKELY THAT AMERICAN PRISONERS WOULD BE HELD AT THIS LATTER LOCATION BECAUSE IT IS TOO CLOSE TO RLG-CONTROLLED AREAS./

10. [REDACTED] VIEWED THE PRISONERS FROM A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 20 METERS. TWO OF THE PRISONERS WERE MALE AND ONE FEMALE. THEY WERE GUARDED BY SEVEN NVA AND 17 PL SOLDIERS.

[REDACTED] COMMENT. WHEN ASKED WHY HE DID NOT APPROACH ANY

[REDACTED]

(classification)

(dissem controls)

CLOSER THAT 20 METERS TO THE PRISONERS, [REDACTED] REPLIED THAT ALTHOUGH VILLAGERS COULD APPROACH TO WITHIN A FEW METERS, PL PERSONNEL WERE NOT AUTHORIZED TO COME IN SIGHT OF OR IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH PRISONERS UNLESS ORDERED TO DO SO. ONE OF THE PL GUARDS TOLD [REDACTED] THAT THE THREE WERE CAPTURED NEAR PHOU /MOUNTAIN/ DOK MAY / UNLOCATED, BUT POSSIBLY IN THE XC 4604 AREA/ NEAR PAKSONG /XB 3378/. THE PRISONERS WERE CAPTURED THREE DAYS BEFORE ARRIVING IN BAN NA SIAT. THE GROUP HAD STOPPED IN BAN NA SIAT FOR LUNCH AND LEFT 30 MINUTES LATER. [REDACTED] LATER HEARD THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM BAN NA SIAT TO BAN NONG KE /POSSIBLE XC 1613, ALTHOUGH TWO OTHER VILLAGES BY THAT NAME ARE LISTED AT XC 2209 AND XC 1602/ IN THE LAO NGAM AREA WHERE THE PL/NVA SARAVANE PROVINCE HEADQUARTERS WAS LOCATED. THE PRISONERS REMAINED AT BAN NONG FOR ABOUT ONE MONTH AND WERE THEN TAKEN TO HANOI.

11. ONE OF THE MALES WAS ABOUT 40 YEARS OLD, WAS DRESSED IN A KHAKI UNIFORM, WORE SUNGLASSES AND SHOES, WAS ABOUT FIVE FEET TEN INCHES TALL WITH A STRONG BUILD, HAD BROWN HAIR AND A RED COMPLEXION. THE OTHER MALE WAS

[REDACTED]

(classification)

(dissem controls)

ABOUT 30 YEARS OLD, WORE PRESCRIPTION-TYPE EYEGLASSES AND SHOES, WAS SHORTER THAN THE FIRST MALE BUT ALSO WITH A STRONG BUILD, HAD BROWN HAIR AND A RED COMPLEXION. THEY DID NOT HAVE ANY INSIGNIA ON THEIR CLOTHING. THE FEMALE WAS ABOUT 30 YEARS OLD, ABOUT 1.50 METERS TALL, HAD LIGHT SKIN AND WORE SUNGLASSES. A PL. GUARD TOLD [REDACTED] THAT THE MEN HAD BOTH BEEN ARMED AND HAD CARRIED COMPASSES, MAPS, AND A RADIO. THE WOMAN HAD A SMALL HAND GUN. HER SHOES HAD BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM HER AFTER SHE ATTEMPTED TO HIDE THE GUN IN THEM. AT FIRST THE NVA HAD TAKEN THE SHOES FROM ALL THE PRISONERS, BUT GAVE THEM BACK WHEN THE PRISONERS REFUSED TO WALK. THE THREE WERE NOT MISTREATED IN ANY WAY WHILE [REDACTED] WAS THERE.

12. [REDACTED] COMMENT. [REDACTED] WAS NOT POSITIVE THAT THE TWO MALES WERE AMERICAN BECAUSE OF THEIR REDDISH SKIN. HE WAS CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT THE FEMALE WAS AMERICAN. [REDACTED] CLAIMED THAT AN AMERICAN OCCASIONALLY VISITED THERE AND TAUGHT HIM ENGLISH. FOR THIS REASON, [REDACTED], WHO CAN SPEAK SOME ENGLISH, BELIEVES HE CAN IDENTIFY AMERICANS. [REDACTED] BELIEVED

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
(classification)

(dissem controls)

THE PRISONERS WERE MEMBERS OF A QUOTE GEOGRAPHIC SURVEY TEAM
UNQUOTE, ALTHOUGH HE COULD OFFER NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THIS
BELIEF.

13. [REDACTED] DISSEM. STATE ARMY AIR USAID/DIRECTOR ONLY/
USIS /DIRECTOR ONOY/ CINCPAC ARPAC PACAF PACFLT MACV/JPRC
7TH AF 7/13TH AF TFA/NKP 7TH RRFS [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]